

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 SAM-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05 IO-10

/071 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2655

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 6275

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, PFOR, CB

SUBJECT: SAUKHAM KHOY REMOVED AS ACTING PRESIDENT AND REPLACED BY
"SUPREME COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLIC"

CAMBODIA-B NO. 10

1. AFTERNOON APRIL 13 GKR FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM GAVE
AMBASSADOR DEAN COPY OF TELEGRAM WHICH HAD JUST BEEN RECEIVED
BY KHMER EMBASSY BANGKOK REGARDING POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS
IN PHNOM PENH FOLLOWING DEPARTURE OF PRESIDENT SAUKHAM KHOY.
THIS SAME MESSAGE HAS ALSO BEEN SENT TO THE KHMER EMBASSIES
IN VIENTIANE AND SAIGON.

2. FOLLOWING IS INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF FRENCH TEXT:

BEGIN TEXT: NO. 24/DGP/AP. HAVE THE HONOR TO INFORM YOU THAT
FOLLOWING THE PRECIPITOUS DEPARTURE OF LTG GAUKHAM KHOY ON
APRIL 12 WITHOUT WARNING THE NATION AND IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH
THE GRAVE SITUATION THROUGH WHICH THE COUNTRY IS PASSING, THE
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC, THE
PRESIDENTS OF THE TWO HOUSES, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ARMY,
THE POLITICAL PARTIES, MEETING UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF PRIME
MINISTER LONG BORET ON 12 APRIL HAVE DECIDED TO CEASE

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RECOGNIZING LTG SAUKHAM KHOY AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

PAR INTERIM AND TO PROPOSE A NUMBER OF URGENT MEASURES WHICH MUST BE TAKEN. THE TWO HOUSES MEETING IN JOINT SESSION ON 12 APRIL 1975 HAVE DECIDED TO CONFER FULL POWERS TO THE ARMY FOR THREE MONTHS AND HAVE PLACED THEMSELVES IN A STATE OF SUSPENSION FOR THE SAME PERIOD. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WILL REMAIN IN PLACE. THE FANK, THE KHMER NATIONAL ARMY, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF LTG SAK SUTSAKHAN HAS DECIDED TO INSTITUTE A SUPREME COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLIC TO EXERCISE THE SUPREME POWERS OF THE COUNTRY FOR THREE MONTHS. THE SUPREME COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLIC COMPRISES SEVEN MEMBERS: LTG SAK SUTSAKHAN, PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET, HANG THUN HAK, GENERAL THONG VAN FANMOUNG, VONG SARENDY, EA CHHONG AND OP KIM ANY. THE SUPREME COMMITTEE WILL IMMEDIATELY ELECT ITS PRESIDENT. ALL ACTIVITIES OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES ARE SUSPENDED. THE SUPREME COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLIC, THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE ARMY WILL WORK FOR AN INTERNAL POLICY OF RESTORING PEACE TO THE COUNTRY BY ALL POSSIBLE MEANS. THE FOREIGN POLICY REMAINS UNCHANGED. THE GOVERNMENT COUNTS ON THE SUPPORT OF ALL ELEMENTS INCLUDING YOURSELF FOR THE FULL SUCCESS OF THE NEW MEASURES NECESSITATED BY THE GRAVE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE COUNTRY. KHMER EMBASSY BANGKOK IS ASKED TO PASS THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS MESSAGE TO HIS EXCELLENCY KEUKY LIM WHO IS ON A MISSION IN BANGKOK. --MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. RECEIVED: 13 APRIL 1975 AT 1150 HOURS. END TEXT.

3. COMMENT: THE EFFECT OF THIS DECISION IS TO ABOLISH THE PRESIDENCY WITH ITS TRAPPINGS AND DEPENDENCIES, TO SHELVE ALL PARLIAMENTARY AND POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY FOR THREE MONTHS, AND TO ELEVATE TO EFFECTIVE POWER A COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF FOUR MILITARY OFFICERS AND THREE CIVILIANS. THE MILITARY ARE THE CHIEF OF STAFF, HIS DEPUTY, AND THE HEADS OF THE NAVY AND AIR FORCE, WHILE THE CIVILIANS ARE THE PRIME MINISTER, HIS DEPUTY (WHO IS THE LEADER OF THE ANTI-LON NON FACTION OF THE SOCIOREPUBLICAN PARTY AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF SIRIK MATAK, WHO WAS PROBABLY PRESENT AT THE MEETING AT WHICH THESE DECISIONS WERE TAKEN.

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4. WHILE THE ONLY STATED POLICY OF THIS GROUP IS TO LEAD THE COUNTRY TO PEACE BY ALL MEANS, IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS IS JUST A CRYSTALLIZATION OF THE RECENT LEADERSHIP (EXCLUDING LON NOL AND SAUKHAM KHOY) WHICH HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND ANY NEW FORMULA FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. IT MIGHT BE ARGUED FURTHER THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THE "SUPREME COMMITTEE" MEMBERS WOULD PREFER TO GO DOWN

FIGHTING RATHER THAN TO TAKE WHATEVER STEPS, HOWEVER
UNPALATABLE, WHICH MIGHT BE REQUIRED TO BRING ABOUT A
CEASE-FIRE NOW. THEY ARE ALL OPPOSED TO ANY DEALINGS
WITH SIHANOUK, APPARENTLY WISH TO PRESERVE THE FORM OF
THE REPUBLIC AT ALL COSTS, AND WILL RUN THE RISK OF
ULTIMATE MILITARY DEFEAT RATHER THAN SEEK PEACE AT ALMOST
ANY PRICE. IT WAS ON THIS ISSUE THAT THIS GROUP BROKE
WITH SAUKHAM KHOY, AND THIS LED TO HIS DECISION TO LEAVE
THE COUNTRY IN OUR EVACUATION OF APRIL 12.
MASTERS

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